

THE CAMBRIDGE STATISTICS DISCUSSION GROUP

Thursday 2nd April 2009 7:15 for 7:45

The Large Seminar Room, Institute of Public Health,
University Forvie Site, Robinson Way, Cambridge

Statistics and the Law

Phil Dawid

Statistical Laboratory

Abstract: It might appear that the concerns of Statistics and those of Law have little common ground, but in fact both disciplines address the same fundamental task: the drawing out of sound inferences from evidence. I will describe the logic of probabilistic reasoning and its application to cases at law, and show how its neglect or misapplication has led to serious errors and miscarriages of justice in some celebrated legal cases.

Speaker: Philip Dawid came to Cambridge as Professor of Statistics in 2007, having spent most of his career in the Department of Statistical Science at University College London. His research interests have centred on the foundations of probability and statistics, with special emphasis on Bayesian inference, graphical modelling and statistical causality. He has a long-standing interest in the rational analysis of legal evidence, and led an international research project applying Bayesian networks to complex cases of forensic identification from DNA profiles. He recently directed a large multidisciplinary research programme "Evidence, Inference and Enquiry" at University College London. He does not like the name "Statistics", and would like to see the subject rebranded as "Evidence Science".

Directions: : (From Central Cambridge) Turn right off Hills Road into the Addenbrooke's site then turn left at the hospital roundabout onto Robinson Way. Follow Robinson Way until you see an access road on the left signed 'Forvie Site' (but note that the sign is on your right). Turn into the access road and follow signs - first to the Institute and then to the Large Seminar Room. There is ample car parking. The front doors will be locked at 7:45. Arrivals after 7:45pm can gain admittance by contacting the secretary on 07761769436.

Provisional Next Meetings:

7th May – Jenni Barclay (UEA).

Supper: Some members eat regularly in the University Centre before each meeting at **5-30pm**. Feel free to join them.

Subscriptions: of 1 pound are now due for attending the 2008-2009 session.

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Take a look at our website: <http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/peter.watson/csdg.html>